Artist and the freedom at this time

Full freedom, imagination, fantasy, discovery and the dream would kill artistic creativity and destroy art itself. Its creation, its evolution and its value as a unique attribute of the human race. Art, however, something more than the act and the process of artistic creation. The work of art transcends the limitation of the artist. It becomes intentionally co-owned, a means of communication between humans, an inescapable value of the company and which also society is inseparable.

Almost everywhere around the world, regardless of political ideologies or thought, art and culture are connected to general shared values of freedom, democracy, prosperity and self-sufficiency. The stark contrast with these countries and cultures where nowadays the free access to and determination of modern art is still perceived as a threat, requires us in these times of crisis, globalization and migration, to pay attention to and reflect upon the relation between modern art, the individual, society and the concept of freedom.

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ISSUE STORY

Invisible Beauty is like a fragile membrane that registers the oscillations of an artistic practice permeated by the current condition of the country and the state of the arts.

Traces of survival in Iraq
A display of more than 500 drawings made by refugees in Northern Iraq - collected by Ruya in Camp Sharya, Camp Baharka and Mar Elias Camp - will accompany the exhibition. Chinese artist Ai Weiwei has selected a number of these works to include in a publication, TRACES OF SURVIVAL: Drawings by Refugees in Iraq selected by Ai Weiwei, which will be launched at the Biennale. The proceeds from the book will be given to those who provided the content.

BIOGRAPHY
A cultural figure of international renown, Ai Weiwei is an activist, artist, curator, filmmaker, and China's most famous artist. Open in his criticism of the Chinese government, Ai was famously detained for months in 2011, then released to house arrest. "I don't see myself as a dissident artist," he says. "I see them as a dissident government." Some of Ai's best known works are installations, often tending towards the conceptual and sparking dialogues between the contemporary world and traditional.
Iraqi Contemporary Art's 'Invisible Beauty' at the Venice Biennale 2015

The Ruya Foundation announced details of the Iraqi Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, as well as a collaboration with Ai Weiwei.

The recent announcement of the National Pavilion of Iraq at the 58th Venice Biennale reveals the country's representative artists as well as an exclusive collaboration with Chinese activist artist Ai Weiwei.

The artists

The artists in the pavilion represent a break - both in terms of media and of wider social concerns - from the constraints of a classical education that informs the orthodox aesthetic tradition of the majority of Iraqi artists' work. The five artists on show are:

Latif Al Ani - photographer (Baghdad)
Akram Shex Hadi - photographer (Kurdistan)
Rabab Ghazoul - performance artist (Wales)
Salam Alota Sabri - ceramicist and sculptor (Baghdad)
Haider Jabbar - painter (Turkey)

Considered the founding father of Iraqi photography, Latif Al Ani (b. 1932) explores both modernising trends and the retention of ancient traditions. On show will be works from the earlier period of his career.

Akram Shex Hadi's (b. 1985) photography engages with the rise of Isis and the refugee crisis. His new series of 28 photographs for the pavilion incorporates a recurrent motif resembling a snake, which references the Isis flag and serves as a reminder of its ensnaring qualities.

Haider Jabbar (b. 1986) will display a series of watercolour portraits - brutal renderings reflecting on the Isis crisis and the fate of its numerous victims.

Rabab Ghazoul (b. 1970) takes the Chilcot Enquiry as her point of departure. Investigating our relationship with political and social structures, part of her work will include an inventory of new official testimonies about the Iraq war, spoken by anonymous British citizens.

Salam Alota Sabri (b. 1953), who has worked in art administration for a long time, will exhibit more than 100 drawings that he has never shown publicly before, which are symptomatic of crumbling infrastructure.